

IDAHO FALLS, IDAHO.
POST REGISTER

CPYRGHT

E. 14,578

S. 20,248

AUG 10 1965

Manhunting The Modern Way

Guessing who will be selected to fill what job in the government—there are about 400 top federal positions that become vacant from time to time—is a favorite game among Washingtonians.

More often than not, and especially so under the present administration, the guessers are wrong.

They are wrong because they are pitting their hunches and "inside information" against the cool calculations of a computer, heart of a personnel hiring system that President Johnson is building into the most scientific the capital has ever seen.

Here is how the system works, according to News Front magazine:

When the President has a post to fill, he first makes known the type of person he wants.

At the touch of a button, in a room in the Bureau of Standards holding essential data on 25,000 potential candidates, the machine can present a list of persons qualified, on paper, to become assistant secretary or administrator or ambassador or whatever.

Here the human element enters in. Actual selection is made by the President, and considerations other than just a bare resume of a career must enter into his judgment. Often the computer's list is supplemented by names he has in mind or names suggested by others.

Examples of computer-located appointees include James Wadsworth, to fill a vacancy on the Federal Communications Commission; Nicholas Katzenbach, advanced to the post of attorney general; retired Adm. William F. Raborn, to head the CIA.

Each of these appointments surprised the guessers.

The quest is for quality. Politics probably carries less weight in the President's decisions than with any chief executive before him. He is also a strong believer in rewarding outstanding government workers with promotion in the ranks.

About half of the President's major appointments have come from within the government, the rest from law, labor, business and the universities.

Of 10 vacancies that have occurred in the No. 2 departmental job of undersecretary, all have been filled by promoting someone already in the particular department.

In the Foreign Service, career personnel now hold about three out of four of the 116 ambassadorial posts.

Another goal of the President is to streamline the method of hiring new employees in the lower levels of the government. There are about 1,200 hirings a day, most of them replacements.

Here, too, "Johnsonization" of the government may mean greater reliance on machines for evaluating a variety of competitive tests. The result will be both a dollar savings to the nation's taxpayers and a gain in the competence and efficiency of their government.